

DISTINCTION by Pierre Bourdieu**SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION AND THE FUNCTION OF TASTE OR THE CAPACITY TO MAKE SOCIAL DISTINCTIONS**

Summary by Julia Lesage

The universe of social and economic conditions and the universe of life styles interpenetrate and shape each other. Cultural features and practices are strongly correlated with one another.

“System of distinctive features.” These features “express or reveal economic and social differences (themselves variable in scale and structure)” p. xii

“Through the economic and social conditions they presuppose, the different ways of relating to realities and fictions, of believing in fictions and the realities they simulate, with more or less distance and detachment, are very closely linked to the different possible positions in social space and, consequently, bound up with the systems of dispositions (habitus) characteristic of the different classes and class fractions. Taste classifies and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed.” p. 5-6

The habitus = “the tastes and distastes, sympathies and aversions, fantasies and phobias which, more than declared opinions, for the unconscious unity of a class.” p. 77 Producing the habitus. “[T]he social relations objectified in things and also, of course, in people are insensibly internalized, taking their place in a lasting relation to the world and to others, which manifests itself, for example, in thresholds of tolerance of the natural and social world, of noise, overcrowding, physical and verbal violence--and of which the mode of appropriation of cultural goods is one dimension.” p. 77

The habitus is necessarily internalized and converted into a disposition which creates meaningful practices and meaning-given perceptions; it is a general, transposable disposition which carries out a systematic, universal application--beyond the limits of what has been directly learnt--of the necessity inherent in the learning conditions.” p. 170

“Dispositions are adjusted not only to a class condition, presenting itself as a set of possibilities and impossibilities, but also to a relationally defined position, a rank in the class structure. They are therefore always related, objectively at least, to the dispositions associated with other positions.” p. 246 “The preferences of a class or a class fraction constitute coherent systems.” p. xiii There are many worlds of preferences. “Each of these worlds .. provides the small number of distinctive features which, functioning as a system of differences, differential deviations allow the most fundamental social differences to be expressed.” p.227 Class fractions or sub groups share some of their distinctive features with other groups.

habitus = “categories of perception and appreciation that are themselves produced by an observable social condition” p. 101 “the capacity to produce classifiable practices and taste, the capacity to differentiate and appreciate these

products and practices.” “a generative principle to account both for the practices and the judgments.” “intelligible relations .. unite apparently incommensurable ‘choices,’ such as preferences in music and food, painting and sport, literature and hairstyle.” p. 6

Taste always “unites and separates.” It “unites all those who are the product of similar conditions while distinguishing them from all others.... [T]aste is the basis for all that one has--people and things--and all that one is for others.” p. 56 Systems of ‘choices’ express in a misrecognized way social conditioning and social conditions, and these seeming choices receive symbolic meaning and value only by reference to other systems of ‘choices,’ especially at the opposite pole. p. 130 We justify a taste by negating other tastes, often using terms of distaste or disgust. The habitus regards other tastes as unnatural and therefore vicious. “Aversion to different life styles is perhaps one of the strongest barriers between the classes; class endogamy is evidence of this.” p. 56 Overdetermination, factors

How a group asserts, “that’s not me.” the importance of saying what I am not.

People have points of view on objective social space which depend on their position in it. They may express a will to transform or conserve, and they usually have a polemical view of the other classes or groups.

Different conditions of existence produce different habitus. “Varied areas of practice .. engendered by the different habitus, appear as systematic configuration of properties. p. 170 Practice-generating schemes are not only systematic but they express both the necessity and the freedom of a given class position.enhance each other.

Fractions and factors are distributed in a socially ranked geographic space: i.e., close to----, far from----.

“The rich man’s ease is always part of the master-slave dialectic.” p.253

HABITUS AS POLITICAL

“The different forms of capital, the possession of which defines class membership and the distribution of which determines position in the power relations constituting the field of power and also determines the strategies available for use in these struggles-- ‘birth,’ ‘fortune,’ and ‘talent’ in a past age, now economic and educational capital--are simultaneously instruments of power and stakes in the struggle for power. They are unequally powerful in real terms and unequally recognized as legitimate principles of authority or signs of distinction, at different moments and, of course, by the different fractions. The definition of the hierarchy between the fractions, or, which amounts to the same thing, the definition of the legitimizing heirarchizing principles, i.e., the legitimate instruments and stakes of struggles, is itself a stake in the struggles between the fractions.” pp. 315-16

In the dominant class, note a group’s “position in the power relations constituting the field of power. .. Various kinds of ‘capital’ are instruments of power, stakes in the struggle for power. p. 316

In the dominant class, there is a struggle to establish and “impose the dominant principle of domination” This group wants to maximize “the distinctive profit of exclusive possessions.” p. 232

"The exchange rate of the different kinds of capital is one of the fundamental stakes in the struggles between class fraction whose power and privileges are linked to one or the other of these types. In particular, this exchange rate is a stake in the struggle over the dominant principle of domination (economic capital, cultural capital, or social capita), which goes on at all times between fractions of the dominant class." p. 125

"The conversion rate between one sort of capital and another is fought over all the time." p. 246 Groups/people trying to appropriate economic and cultural goods are involved in symbolic struggles to appropriate distinguishing signs, classify goods/practices, and conserve or subvert the principle of classification of the distinctive properties. p. 249

Different fractions of the dominant class fight "to impose the definition of the legitimate stakes and weapons of social struggles; in other words, to define the legitimate principle of domination, between economic, educational, or social capital, social powers whose specific efficacy may be compounded by specifically symbolic efficacy, that is, the authority conferred by being recognized, mandated by collective belief." p. 254

There is always a struggle to define the stakes and legitimate means of the struggle, especially the class struggle. The strength I and my fraction command depends on the distribution of the different types of capital; and how the game and its outcome are defined affects the relative efficacy of different sorts of capital in controlling the game, and also the strength which I as an individual command (e.g., a teacher or a doctor and their capital can be defined as efficacious or not; their profession and credentials can be devalued--as more outsiders enter the profession, with downsizing, etc.).

"The field of struggles [is] the system of objective relations within which .. positions and postures are defined relationally and which governs even those struggles aimed at transforming it. Only by reference to the space in the game which defines them and which they seek to maintain or redefine, can one understand the strategies, individual or collective, spontaneous or organized, which are aimed at conserving, transforming, or transforming so as to conserve." p. 156

"More than all of the other choices .. they [the political choices] involve the more or less systematic representation an agent has of the social world, of his position within it and of the position he "ought" to occupy." p. 454 Political discourse euphemizes and universalizes that representation.

"Political opinion is not a purely informative judgment which 'catches on' by the intrinsic force of its truth, but an idee-force, containing a pretension to become a reality; and the more numerous and power the group it mobilizes by its symbolic efficacy, the greater its power of potential enactment. In other words, because it necessarily contains a power to mobilize and a pretension to exist, political opinion is defined, not only by its informative content but also by the social force whereby it exists as a political force, although it is political opinion which helps to make that social force exist by mobilizing the group which contains it in potential form." p. 413

Political competence depends on the probability of exercising that capacity; indifference is only a matter of impotence. p. 406 "Political competence, in the sense

of a socially recognized capacity, is one of the attitudes a person has insofar as he has a right to have them." p. 410

When people answer "don't know" on an opinion poll, the don't knows and their variations are the most important info supplied: out of my range, don't want to say what I really think, not a question that interests or pertains to me, not my sphere. p. 399

There is such a close correlation between religious practice and political opinion, these often seem "simply two manifestations of the same disposition." "in the content and disciplines of inculcation, religious training is a disguised form of political socialization." There is a complementary class of non-believers who do not have certain essential traits which "we" have. See the social world in terms of personal salvation, will; poverty and misfortune, like sickness and death, are personal misfortunes. p. 440

Political judgment is always based on faith. People choose a spokesperson, whose personality embodies ideas, projects, and programs, often not laid out explicitly. The spokesperson expresses a habitus, the generative principle for their judgments, what is intuited in personality, bearing, body, decorum, diction, manners.

Resentment over downward trajectory characterizes the declining fraction of the pb, expressed as moral indignation. The ascendant pb want a meritocratic revolution and no longer see their merits suffer unrewarded, revolt and condemn the established order. Enlightened conservatism uses these right and left tendencies to present itself as a vanguard. p. 435-36

Evaluate the different ways of being or declaring oneself conservative, and the different meanings of a vote for a conservative politician.

We need to ask what the mode of production of an answer to a political question is: 1. It may be "a class ethos, a generative formula not constituted as such which enables objectively coherent responses, compatible with the practical premises of a practical relation to the world, to be generated for all the problems of everyday existence." p. 481 This ethos is systematic, preconscious, based on implicit principles, class habitus. 2. It may be "a systematic political 'slant' (parti); a set of explicitly political principles generates x, and no other, political acts and judgments. It is based on axiomatics and has an explicit, intentional coherence of principles. 3. "An organization providing a political line on a set of problems. Adherence to the organization may come from ethos or parti. The party has a programme.

CLASS AND HABITUS

"The struggles to win everything which, in the social world, is of the order of belief, credit and discredit, perception and appreciation, knowledge and recognition -- name renown, prestige, honor, glory, authority -- always concern the 'distinguished' possessors and the 'pretentious' challengers." p. 251

I use the group immediately below me, the one I believe is below me, as a foil, and so can identify with the group I ascertain is immediately above me. I see it as having the legitimate life style. I thus always reproduce "the automatic, unconscious effects of the dialectic of the rare and the common, the new and the dated, which is inscribed in the objective differentiation of conditions and

dispositions." p. 24 I recognize my group's value "in that which makes its value." p. 247 Petit b. pride in rigor, cleanliness, sobriety or seriousness, and neatness implies always working class "uncleanness, intemperance, improvidence." Bourgeois "ease, discretion, detachment, and disinterestedness" always refers to p.b. "pretension, excess/insufficiency"; the p. b. is seen by the bourgeoisie as "narrow minded, flashy, arrogant, servile, ignorant or pedantic." The values of the upper levels, what is rare or luxury, is for those a rank down a fantasy or an unattainable luxury. The tastes of the lower ranks are banal or taken for granted by the upper ranks.

"Each class condition is defined, simultaneously, by its intrinsic properties and by the relational properties which it derives from its position in the system of class conditions, which is also a system of differences, differential positions, i.e., by everything which distinguishes it from what it is not and especially from everything it is opposed to; social identity is defined and asserted through difference." pp. 170 and 172

"Taste is a match-maker; it marries colors and also people, who make 'well-matched couples', initially in regard to taste. This happens especially via "sign reading operations (particularly visible in first encounters) through which a habitus confirms its affinity with other habitus." p. 243 Immediate affinities orient social encounters, discourage socially discordant relationships, encourage well-matched relationships, without these operations ever having to be formulated other than in the socially innocent language of likes and dislikes. It seems like a happy coincidence. "Those whom we find to our taste put into their practices a taste which does not differ from the taste we put into operation in perceiving their practices. Two people can give each other no better proof of the affinity of their tastes than the taste they have for each other." p. 243 "Love is also a way of loving one's own destiny in someone else and so of feeling loved in one's own destiny."

Raising consciousness means making explicit what is given. That requires or results in suspending attachment to the given, so one can hate one's destiny.

In the dominant class, there is competition between the established and the challenger, the dominated and the dominant fractions. Each of the fractions of the dominant class has its own struggles between young and old, possessors and challengers, seniors vs. newcomers (but the seniors may be the more innovative ones)

Cultural capital can be educational or inherited; those with inherited cultural capital are habituated to take the most advantage of education.

The slope of my or, more so, my group's economic trajectory causes my enchanted or disenchanted relation to our/my position. Upward trajectory, attitude is future-oriented, interested in novelty, movement, innovation, progress, with a positive attitude toward youth, social optimism.

Changes occur in the definition of occupational positions, in the institutionalized access to them, variations in the job description over time, and varying ways of access to the job--especially because of changes in the educational system and in the relative importance of different routes to that job. p. 295 "...reproduction through displacement [time lag, devalued degrees, etc.] ..

perpetuates the structure of positions while transforming the 'nature' of conditions." p. 165

Professionals get economic and symbolic capital, a reputation, respectability; they may become a local notable who can enter politics. They have convertible respectability. They identify with the established moral order.

Especially affecting the fractions most linked to the economy with a monopoly on instruments, machines and equipment are trajectories of occupations where the job definitions are relatively stable-- MD, college professor, lawyer, etc.

Economic and political culture belong to the dominant sector of the dominant class.

Use table on p. 262 for preface. Most clear cut opposition is between commercial + to a lesser extent, industrial employers vs. college teachers and artistic producers, who are almost indistinguishable). Note how different fractions demand different qualities, experiences, processes and products from art, education, news and government.

Commercial employers are middle brow in culture; the qualities often chosen by working or middle class in ethics, especially in regards to an interior or friend, "easy to maintain, practical, conscientious, level headed."

Teachers reveal the disparity between economic and cultural capital, especially certified educational capital.

If I cling to the academic verdict and have meritocratic indignation at being treated like a worker, I may both want to maintain a distance from workers and feel solidarity with them. Ambivalence here.

"The reality of the social world is in fact partly determined by the struggles between agents over the representation of their position in the social world and, consequently, of that world." p. 253 Bluff depends of the relative autonomy of the symbolic, so a person can impose a self representation of higher condition, winning legitimizing recognition. p. 253

How I represent my position, the objective future of that position, and how others represent my position all help determine the objective future of the position.

The upwardly mobile petite bourgeoisie [p.b.] resents the way the social system does not fully recognize their merit, that is, the educational system's classification.

Technicians, at the lowest rung of the dominant class, often have the p.b. disposition.

New fields and positions, such as in the media, are both risky and profitable; there is social mobility in and up in this kind of work.

The p.b. is committed to the symbolic; with a concern for appearances, pretension. They anticipate 'being' by seeming, trying to modify their objective position by modifying the representation of the ranks or principles of classification, especially those p.b. with an upward economic trajectory. They are haunted all the time with being seen in a good light; their world is reduced to a theater.

P.b.'s fierce habitus, accumulation strategies, and pretension to having objective chances to rise actually increase the thrust of their upward trajectory and its chances of completion. p. 333 "The habitus generates representations and practices which are always more adjusted than they seem to be to the objective conditions of which they are the product." p. 244

Downward economic trajectory is oriented toward the past, expresses resentment; group cannot imitate or get to level of their predecessors, and cannot reproduce their level/properties in their children. Youth in this group have to reconvert their capital and change class fraction, which becomes a source of generational conflict, due to different values, life-styles, and percentage of economic or cultural capital.

P.b. resentment. "Their anxious search for integration into the dominant class, either for themselves or for their children, always includes .. an element of ambivalent resentment towards prizes they can neither completely possess nor completely ignore and refuse." p. 304

"The p.b. do not know how to play the game of culture as a game. They take culture too seriously..." They identify "culture with knowledge, they think that the cultivated man is one who possess an immense fund of knowledge..." p. 331 Making culture a matter of life and death....[as] self made men, they cannot have the familiar relation to culture which authorizes the liberties and audacities of those who are linked to it by birth, that is by nature and essence." p. 331

"The aesthetic disposition potentially implies a subversion of the spirit of seriousness required by bourgeois investments." p. 57 Seriousness' relation to economic. capital + low cultural capital. Petit bourgeois. moralism is what Sartre used to call the revolution's "seriousness."

Petite bourgeoisie. Seriousness betrays that they do not have a legitimate relation to culture, which would be "to know without having ever learned." p. 330 "The cost [is] a permanent tension that is always liable to explode into aggressivity." p. 337

p.b. ethics. "an almost insatiable thirst for rules of conduct which subjects the whole of life to rigorous discipline" p. 331 "the characteristic dispositions of the p.b. habitus--asceticism, rigor, legalism, the propensity to accumulation in all its forms" p. 331 Morality is the p.b. strong point but "strict and rigorous, its formalism and scruples always make it tense, susceptible, and rigid." p. 338

downwardly mobile p.b., shopkeepers, older junior execs and office workers, traditional craftsmen. They "make a virtue of their necessity, elevate their particular morality into a universal morality. ... For these scourges of privilege, morality is the only title which give a right to every privilege. Their resentment often leads to fundamentally ambiguous political positions in which verbal fidelity to past convictions is a mask for present disenchantment..." p. 353

rudeness and moral righteousness, manners, censored language -- ambivalence characterizes the p.b., see social life as theater, as making an impression or impact.

search for rules of conduct; small, strait, severe behavior. PB has so little capital it can only offer moral guarantees.

"The rising p b endlessly remakes the history of the origins of capitalism; and to do so, like the Puritans, it can only count on asceticism." p. 333

CULTURE AS A GAME

"Ideology is an illusion consistent with interest, but a well-grounded illusion." p. 74. Kinds of misrecognition, especially when seeming opponents do not acknowledge their complicity in the same cultural game.

To take part in the game, you agree on the stakes, enough to fight for them, so there are complicities which unite you both in the hostility. p. 316

the game of culture. "It is in these struggles [around distinction] between objectively complicit opponent that the value of culture is generated, or, which amounts to the same thing, belief in the value of culture, interest in culture and the interest of culture -- which are not self evident, although one of the effects of the game is to induce belief in the innateness of the desire to play and the pleasure of playing." p. 250 Culture is a fetish; just joining the game is an illusion, a social artifact.

CLASSIFYING SYSTEMS

The symbolic order = the order of significant distinctions.

The distribution of capital (the balance sheet of a power relation) is transformed into perceived differences, distinctive traits. Thus in the distribution of symbolic capital, the objective truth of capital is misrecognized.

Taste "governs the relation with objectified [literally in objects] capital, with this world of ranking objects which help to define it by enabling it to specify and so realize itself." p. 231

We form our classifying systems by internalizing the structure of a social space, the limits of economic possibilities and limitations, the regularities inherent in a condition; necessity transformed into strategies, constraint into preferences. When resources change, tastes change. p. 175

Taste = "a classification system constituted by the conditionings associated with a condition situated in a determinate position in the structure of conditions." p. 231

Habitus table, p. 171. People are conditioned by their class that conditions them, and their position in their class [objectively classifiable conditions of existence] to a habitus. The habitus generates unconscious ways of classifying practices and works, and conscious ways of perceiving them [distinction, taste]. Out of these classifiable practices and works comes that group's life style, which is a system of classified and classifying practices.

"Tastes (distinction) .. vary in a necessary way according to their social and economic conditions of production." p. 101 Lived experience has gaps, discontinuities, changes of focus, different times at which people experience the same thing, and differences in how the same thing is experienced at different times.

Cultural goods and the taste for them = ways of appropriating these that are considered legitimate and the social conditions that shape these modes of appropriation p. 1

When I judge different conditions as differences between the (classified / classifying) practices of my habitus and others, my principles of differentiation tend to find both the things and my classifying schema “natural.”

“The ability to make refined classifications, the readiness to comment on them and, especially, to give names or qualifiers to the categories varies even more strongly by social position, educational capital, and also social origin.” p. 409, relates to Limbaugh.

To think of class as a conceptual and social division means you have already internalized the division into social classes. Primary cognition is already misrecognition.

The system of matching properties includes matching people. “The countless pieces of information a person consciously or unconsciously imparts endlessly underline and confirm one another.” p. 174 These redundancies cause / indicate overdetermination.

LIFE STYLES

Life style. Practices and products are used in a way that is “orchestrated” within one person or among members of the same class. We see this unconscious conditioning in terms of motor habits, practical metaphors, and inscriptions in the body. “The practices of the same agent, and, more generally, the practices of all the agents of the same class, owe the stylistic affinity which makes each of them a metaphor for any of the others to the fact that they are the products of transfers of the same schemes of action from one field to another.” p. 173

“Taste, the propensity and capacity to appropriate (materially or symbolically) a given class of classified / classifying objects or practices, is the generative formula of a life style, a unitary set of distinctive preferences which express the same expressive intention in the specific logic of the symbolic subspaces...” p. 173

Life style = a set of ‘choices’. Taste “is a virtue made of necessity which continuously transforms necessity into virtue by inducing ‘choices,’ which correspond to the condition of which it [taste] is the product.” p. 175

Grasping and image are always part of what constitutes culture.

In everyday life, social space’s distances are kept or signaled; neighbors may be more remote than strangers. It’s the “traveling space” of ordinary experience, with its gaps and discontinuities.” p. 169

time as precious, rich have it across generations, visible value of heirlooms, titles

An “antithesis between understanding and sensibility, reflection and sensation .. is at the heart of the dominant representation of the relationship between the dominant and the dominated... [This] evokes the opposition between two relations to the social world, between the sovereign viewpoint of those who dominate the social world in practices or in thought .. and the blind, narrow, partial vision .. of those who are dominated by this world.” p. 444

FIELDS

Since different fields have different cultural logics, [(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice. p. 101

Taste relates intellectual products and producers to their social conditions of existence. xiii

"Objectified cultural capital only exists and subsists in and through the struggles of which the fields of cultural production (the artistic field, the scientific field, etc.) and beyond them, the field of the social classes, are the site -- struggles in which the agents wield strengths and obtain profits proportionate to their mastery of this objectified capital, in other words, their internalized capital." p. 228

CONSUMPTION

"A cultivated disposition and cultural competence .. are revealed in the nature of the cultural goods consumed, and in the way they are consumed." p. 13

"At equivalent levels of educational capital, the weight of social origin in the practice- and preference-explaining system increases as one moves away from the most legitimate areas of capital." p. 13

Private sector executives are more modern, younger in life style, have more educational capital, are more sports oriented, and do more foreign travel than traditional industrialists

Luxury, high art, distinctive value = distance from common things, or a way of aestheticizing common things so as to see them as distanced. Sobriety, simplicity, and economy of means are far removed from first degree poverty and simplicity. Refinement means renunciation and negation, self-consciousness. When goods, culture indicates the rarity of the means required to appropriate it, the reflects on the person's disposition and competence. Denial of "lower, coarse, vulgar, venal, servile" enjoyment vs. those whose disinterested and distinguished pleasures are "forever closed to the profane." p.7 In consumption, differences are based on the tastes of luxury (or freedom) and the tastes of necessity. The former expresses distance, ease, while the latter expresses the necessities.

Popular art and pleasures. The passions, emotion, and feeling, similar to and evoking that which 'ordinary' people invest in their 'ordinary' lives. p.4 appeal of "that which speaks most directly to the senses and to sensibility." p. 32 Community, festivity, release, familiarity, collective participation in the show, direct and immediate satisfactions. comic parody of the "great" -- satire is a part of comic revelry, with plain speaking, and hearty and irreverent laughter. p. 34 Immediacy, actuality, facticity, ephemeral events, rallying cries, immersed in events and sensation.

Food = durable nostalgia; archetypal cultural good, signifying pleasure giving; reinforcement of pleasure shapes disposition to pleasure. Thus our oldest and deepest experiences overdetermine the deepest oppositions, such as bitter / sweet, flavorful / insipid, hot / cold, coarse / delicate, austere / bright. p. 79

Products are shaped by the logic of consumption; the producers' interest, habitus, and position in the field of production; the different cultural interests of consumers, who often invest a different disposition in using the same objects of consumption [e.g., the family channel]. "the apparent constancy of the products conceals the diversity of the social uses they are put to." p. 21 Products become fully

determined only with social use, which varies according to class or class fraction. E.g., ways of doing, using, cooking, furnishing, purchasing, vacationing.

“Every change in the system of goods induces a change in taste. When conditions of existence and the corresponding dispositions change, this affects and transforms the field of production, rewarding producers who best meet the new dispositions.” p. 231

Distinction strategies determine the dynamics of the fields. Producers can easily be unaware of the social functions they fulfill and claim interest only in specific artistic goals. There is often “homology between the position of the producers (or the works) in the field of production and the positions of consumers in social space (i.e., in the overall class structure or in the structure of the dominant class.” p. 20 Critics always have a relation of aesthetic and ethical connivance with their readers. It is a way that works become adjusted to the expectations of their audiences.

The objective orchestration of supply and demand happens on the one hand because consumer demand “is shaped in the objectively or subjectively antagonistic relations between the different classes or class fractions over material and cultural goods or, more exactly, in the competitive struggles between them over these goods, which are the source of the changing of tastes.” p. 230 The profits of distinction depend on the field of production of cultural goods always supplying new goods and new ways of using the same goods. p. 230

Objectification. When an object is manufactured, usually in quantity, objectification also always has a legitimizing and reinforcing function. p. 230 Any cultural product “is a constituted taste, a taste which has been raised from the vague semi-existence of half formulated or unformulated experience, implicit or unconscious desire, to the full reality of the finished product, by means of a process of objectification, which is almost always the work of professionals.” p. 231 There is an objectification of the ‘necessities’ which determined the selection and acquisition of an object.

The social relations objectified in familiar objects (with positive or negative feelings toward them) “impress themselves through bodily experience.” p. 77 Art always has something that communicates from body to body, falling short of words. Music, gesture, rhythm “carry us away” and “move us” with quickening and slowing, crescendo and decrescendo, tension and relaxation. p. 79

The field functions as source of inculcation and as a market. The field of production relies on already existing ‘taste’ to consume rather clearly defined goods; it offers a universe of products which = a system of stylistic possibles (which limit the forms of experience -- aesthetically, political, ethical, etc.--that one could have). p. 230 Goods and tastes are homologous, attuned to one’s position. Things and practices “go together.”

Being a consumer is a labor of appropriation, a labor of identification and decoding, which may constitute all or part of the consumption and gratification, as with high art. Consumption relies on schemes of perception, appropriation, usage. The disposition defines a product’s useful properties and real uses. “Objects, even industrial products, are not objective in the ordinary sense of the word, i.e., independent of the interest and taste of those who perceive them, and they do not

impose the self-evidence of a universal, unanimously approved meaning." p. 100
 Consumers have a different experience of a product. We are predisposed to receive/consume very different values in the marketplace. An object is used by different groups in different ways. To select an object is to look at its practices but also implies our own classifying operations. pp. 169-70

We have seen "changes in the mode of domination, which, substituting seduction for repression, public relations for policing, advertising for authority, the velvet glove for the iron fist, pursues the symbolic integration of the dominated classes by imposing needs rather than inculcating norms." p. 154

ART

The symbolic appropriation of a work of art is always an act of distinction, thus a social relation. Artistic communism would say art is there for everyone, but going to museums is done mainly by a fraction of the dominant class.

Restraint, ease, inherited cultural capital, the educated eye, upbringing, social origin, early access to legitimate culture, cultural competence. "All the characteristics of social condition which are (statistically) associated from earliest childhood with possession of low or high income ... tend to shape tastes adjusted to these conditions." p. 177

In left bank art, we expect a symbolic challenging of social reality.

The bourgeoisie easily use the art produced against them; it shows they are on the side of disinterestedness, freedom, purity, the soul.

Refinement vs. simple pleasure of the senses, especially in ornament, like gold.

the social hierarchy of consumers and their "manner[s]" of using culture.

Naming things: indicates a capacity, a way and power of seeing. Identifying the stylistic properties of the work, a decoding. See the work more as form than function.

"Any legitimate work tends in fact to impose the norms of its own perception and tacitly defines as the only legitimate mode of perception the one which brings into play a certain disposition and a certain competence." p. 28

The imposition of legitimacy occurs because it is dominant; thus it can define that "is what I am or it is" and discourage our seeing what it "really is." The distinctive value of something is gained from our unconscious reference to class distribution as the "legitimate" taste for it.

Art which asserts the primacy of form over function "categorically demands a purely aesthetic disposition." p. 30

High art. An autonomous field, that is, one that can impose its own norms on the production and consumption of its products. Claim to do pure art, have purely aesthetic motives, not be commercial = intention to be autonomous, to be "master." Cut back on reference and function.

Discernment seems the natural trait of the aristocrat. Good taste denies the social. Gratuitous luxury. "Economic power is first and foremost a power to keep

economic necessity at arm's length." p. 53 Distance, height, overview, objectivity, reflection.

The artistic gaze relies on having ease, both in terms of leisure time and in subjective facility. A cultural object's effect on "perceivers" is one of the key markers of class.

Aesthetic disposition is defined in contrast to (awareness of) dire necessity. "Objective distance from necessity and from those trapped within it combines with a conscious distance which doubles freedom by exhibiting it. This is what Weber called stylizing life.

Art of living. "The ethical indifference which the aesthetic disposition implies when it becomes the basis for the art of living is in fact the root of the ethical aversion to artists (or intellectuals) which manifests itself particularly vehemently among the declining and threatened fractions of the petite bourgeoisie (especially independent craftsmen and shopkeepers), who tend to express their regressive and repressive dispositions in all areas of practice (especially in educational matters and vis-a-vis students and student demonstrations), but also among the rising fractions of that class whose striving for virtue and whose deep insecurity render them very receptive to the phantasm of 'pornocracy.'" p. 48

The audacities of the new bourgeoisie and that of the younger generation of the dominant fractions of the bourgeoisie indicate that these are still "poor relations." p. 233

Artists are ambivalent since they want to widen their audience, thus do cultural proselytism, yet they want cultural distinction and will talk about how paperbacks, television, etc. cheapen literary works.

Working class taste. The image must perform a function, especially in terms of morality or being agreeable, therefore ethical. p. 5. No distance from necessity. "Popular taste applies the schemes of the ethos, which pertain in the ordinary circumstances in life, to legitimate works of art, and so performs a systematic reduction of the things of art to the things of life." p. 5 "the popular disposition annexes .. aesthetics to ethics."

SCHOOLING

Academic capital. Cultural competence is tied to academic capital. Ac. capital comes from family's culture, habitus, and money; and also from cultural transmission and certification from the school.

School helps "to form a general, transposable, disposition towards legitimate culture," especially if reinforced by the family. Later, this disposition moves beyond school to a "disinterested' propensity to accumulate experience and knowledge." p. 23

Different ways of producing/cultivating the habitus. Different conditions of acquisition and different ways of applying competencies. Different modes of acquiring cultural capital are especially related to family and education, and in some cases, religious subculture.

Trajectory. Think of initial capital and eventual capital: economic, cultural, educational. social, political.

Cultural capital is evidenced by “the self-assurance of legitimate membership and the ease given by familiarity.” p. 81

The autodidact was excluded from culture early and abruptly and now has an exalted and misplaced reverence for it. The counterculture produces a new style autodidact, investing in areas disclaimed or abandoned by the educational system; the counterculture still want their authorities and gurus to guide them.

In school, getting cultural competence also means getting the ‘sense’ for sound cultural investment. p. 85

One’s felt relation to culture = “the internalized form of the objective relationship between the site of acquisition and the ‘center of cultural values.’” p. 85
I may think I have a disinterested attitude in my cultural judgments, but that always involves misrecognition. It is an “investment in the game which produces the game.” p.86

The established petit bourgeois. has relatively high educational capital [prudence, discretion, awareness of limits] and relatively weak cultural inheritance [assurance, flair, even bluff]. Upward trajectory, or youth maintaining the same position, requires “a sense of the right moment to invest or disinvest, to move into other fields when the gains in distinction become too uncertain.” p. 92

Media work offers a less determined position in social space and includes occupations like therapist, body work, etc. The obsequium which sets limits to the p.b. revolt also establishes the social virtues of the new, ascendant p.b. in the service and sales sector, where their certainty about good taste and snobbery are foisted on the working class to sell them the lasted bourgeois ‘must.’ This group wants the social recognition, dignity, symbolic aspects of ascent. Supports campaigns for education and information and expresses righteous indignation, but does not support strikes; it seeks the ‘institutionalization’ of its demands.

Class mobility is related to an “intensified competition for academic qualifications.” “Those fractions of the dominant class and middle class who are riches in economic capital (i.e., industrial and commercial employers, craftsmen and tradesmen) have had to make greatly increased use of the educational system in order to ensure their social reproduction.” p. 132

Mobility that appeals to women, rising class aspirants, and less successfully educated of the rich is the more diffusely defined, hazy career path. People are always educating themselves, study and in and out of work. The old system of class had clearly demarcated jobs and induced people to “accept their position”; it also led to social crisis and a well defined critique. “The new system of structural instability in the representation of social identity and its legitimate aspirations tends to shift agents from the terrain of social crisis and critique to the terrain of personal critique and crisis.” p. 156

New masters of economics have a world view = management science, as part of economics, give a sense of intellectual authority over social conduct. p. 315

“The same factor may be associated with different effects, depending on the system of factor’s in which it’s inserted.” p. 438. Example is getting a college degree.

OTHER

See page 452, chart.